

REMARKS

Claims 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 14 and 16 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asou et al. (US 2002/0105800 A1) in view of Edlund et al. (US 6,221,117 B1). Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asou et al. in view of Edlund et al. further in view of Shunsuke (JP 02017306 A). Claims 25 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asou et al. in view of Edlund et al. and further in view of Iwasaki (WO 01/92147). Claims 21 to 24, 27, and 28 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 14 to 20, 25, and 26 have been canceled. Claims 21 and 27 have been amended. Claims 21 to 24, 27, and 28 now include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

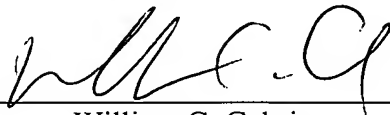
CONCLUSION

The present application is respectfully submitted as being in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request such action.

Respectfully submitted,

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